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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

RECENT ACTIVITIES IN NORTH VIETNAM

(29 JULY-4 AUGUST 1968)

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6 August 1968

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
6 August 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Recent Activities in North Vietnam  
(29 July-4 August 1968)

Summary

North Vietnam continued to expand and diversify its military and logistics activities throughout the country, and the pace of industrial rehabilitation has been stepped up.

Transport activities south of the 19th Parallel continued at a high level although somewhat below last week's pace. Truck sightings were 25 percent above the weekly average since 1 April 1968. Watercraft sightings were more than 50 percent higher than the weekly average since April, but were down substantially from last week's record sightings.

Additional new road construction will further enhance North Vietnam's transport capabilities in the Panhandle.

In the North, significant progress is being made on repairing damaged powerplants at Hon Gai, Uong Bi, and Thai Nguyen. The Viet Tri paper plant has been partially repaired, and limited production may be under way for the first time in more than a year. The Phu Tho chemical fertilizer plant may attempt to resume operations with domestically produced apatite. Limited rail service at Viet Tri, which

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared jointly by the Office of Economic Research and the Office of Current Intelligence and was coordinated with the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.

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had been halted by flooding in mid-July, was re-  
stored by the end of the month. Truck imports  
through Lao Cai in northwestern North Vietnam  
were observed for the first time.

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North Vietnam continued to seek foreign assist-  
ance from both Communist and Free World sources.  
The North Vietnamese trade delegation completed  
its annual trade and aid negotiations by signing  
an agreement with China

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The total inventory of MIG's,  
including those in China, reached a record high of  
146. One MIG-21 and one MIG-17 were shot down during  
the week, and the airfield at Vinh may become avail-  
able for emergency use shortly.

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South of the 19th ParallelRailroads

1. The North Vietnamese are attempting to repair the railroad line between Thanh Hoa and Vinh at Dien Chau, just south of the 19th Parallel. The four railroad crossings at this site have been interdicted for at least four months, thus stopping through rail service to Vinh. Despite almost daily attacks against these bridges, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] one of the crossings is being reconstructed. If the North Vietnamese can maintain the serviceability of one of these bridges, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] rail traffic can continue further south and time-consuming transshipment operations at this point will be eliminated.

2. Further south along the Thanh Hoa - Vinh line, at Tam Da, however, the North Vietnamese have made only sporadic attempts to repair the main railroad bridge and its bypass. Instead of restoring through rail service at this point, the North Vietnamese apparently intend to rely on highways, as several new roads have been constructed around the area.

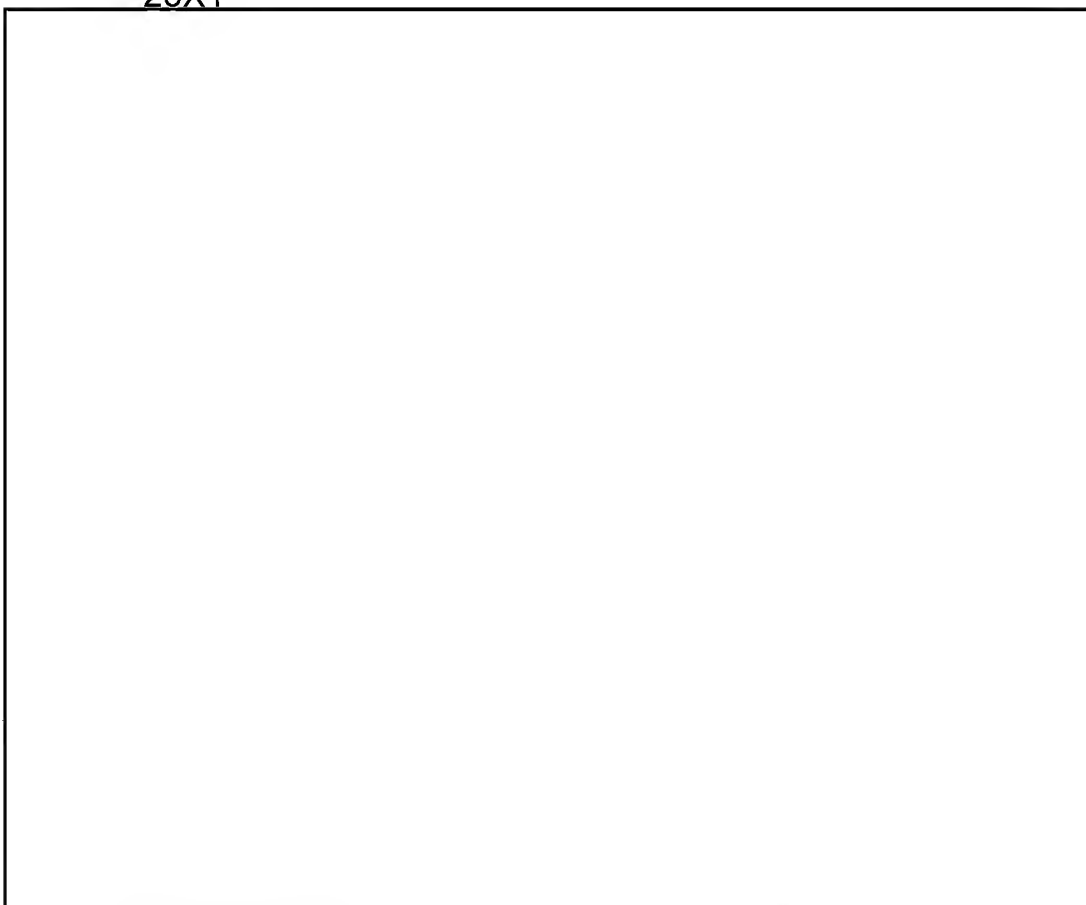
Watercraft

3. [REDACTED] relatively high levels of watercraft activity. About 650 watercraft were noted south of the 19th Parallel, compared with over 1,200 sightings last week and with an average of 390 per week since 1 April. The most active waterway was the Song Giang between Quang Khe and Tien Luong, where concentrations of POL-carrying sampans were attacked and several large motorized vessels were sighted.

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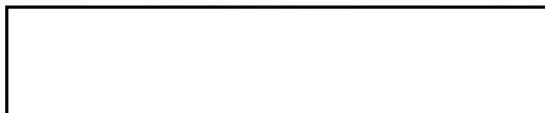
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Truck Traffic

6. Sightings of trucks in the Panhandle of North Vietnam this week were again substantial, with total traffic sightings about 25 percent greater than the weekly average noted since 1 April, although truck losses were only slightly above the weekly average. Truck sightings for the month of July were 28 percent greater than for June. Total attack sorties increased by 41 percent over comparable periods of time. The prevalence of relatively poor weather over the southern route packages of North Vietnam during July means that the increase in sightings must be attributed at least in part to increased traffic movements and not entirely to the increase in sorties flown.

7. Concentrations of approximately 50 vehicles were sighted and attacked near the junction of Routes 101 and 137 during the nights of 31 July

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and 1 August. Similar large concentrations of trucks were noted in the same general area last week, indicating that large numbers of trucks are continuing to use the major roads leading into southern Laos and the DMZ. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] sighted two groups of trucks -- one in excess of 20 vehicles -- along newly constructed Route 1036 south of Bat Lake. Attacks against these trucks resulted in numerous secondary explosions and fires, indicating that the vehicles were moving ammunition into the western portion of the DMZ.

[REDACTED] sightings, destruction, damage, and effective truck losses are shown in the following tabulation:

	<u>Sighted</u>	<u>De- stroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>	<u>Total De- stroyed or Damaged</u>	<u>Effective Losses <sup>a/</sup></u>
This week b/ (29 July- 4 August)	907	120	111	231	118
Last week (22-28 July)	898	186	87	273	162
Weekly average (since 1 April)	727	121	83	204	112

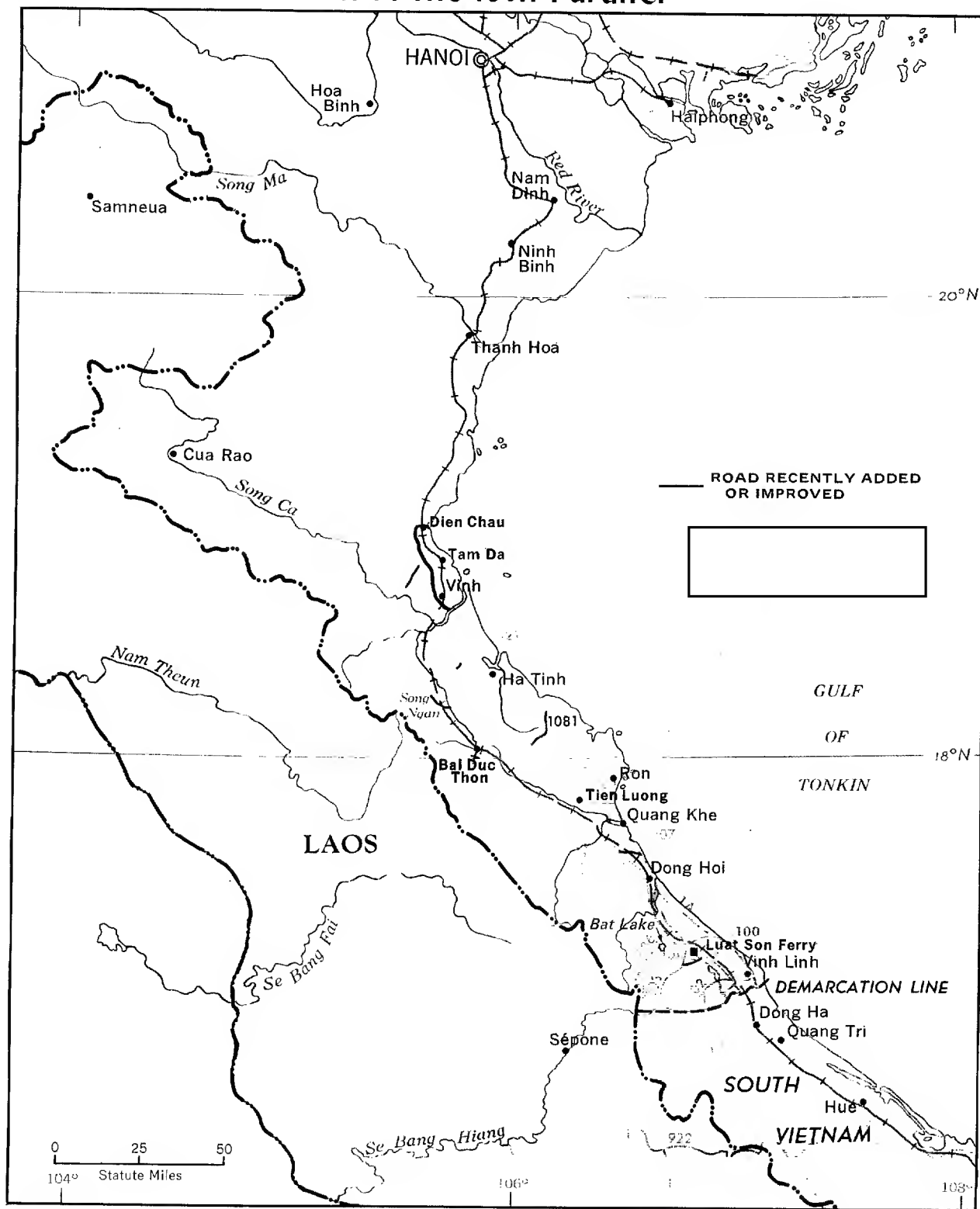
a. Effective losses are computed by deflating reports of destroyed and damaged trucks -- by assuming that 75 percent of those reported destroyed and 25 percent of those reported damaged are actually destroyed and not returned to service.

b. Preliminary data.

#### Road Construction (see the map)

8. In the Ha Tinh and Vinh areas, three new connecting roads have been built, adding flexibility to the inland road network. One 6-mile section, Route 1081, branches off Route 1A approximately 20 miles south of Ha Tinh and connects with Route 82,

# North Vietnam South of the 19th Parallel





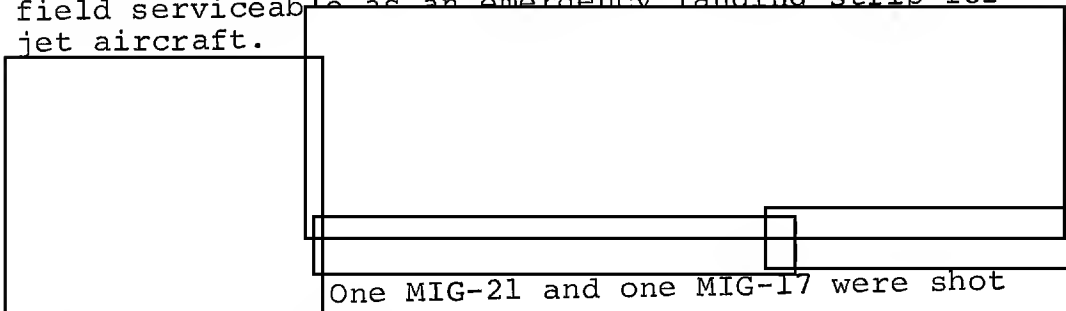
which is another major north-south artery. Some 10 miles northwest of Ha Tinh, a new 4-mile road section built to connect Routes 82 and 821 will facilitate access to the major north-south Route 101 farther west. The third newly built segment, a 9-mile one-lane road, runs southwest from Route 71 to Route 72 some 10 miles west of Vinh.

9. Near the Laotian border, a 5-mile bypass to part of Route 15 was under construction from a point 9 miles north of Bai Duc Thon. This bypass will connect Route 15 to Route 1599 leading west to the Laotian border. Part of Route 1599 was reported to be serviceable.

10. Two new bypasses have been built near the DMZ. A new 8-mile, single-lane, connecting road was built to link Routes 101 and 103 and bypass the important Luat Son highway ferry. Farther north, a bypass was built some 5 miles south of a section of Route 107, which links Routes 101 and 1A.

#### Air Operations

25X1 11. The North Vietnamese may be making Vinh Airfield serviceable as an emergency landing strip for jet aircraft.

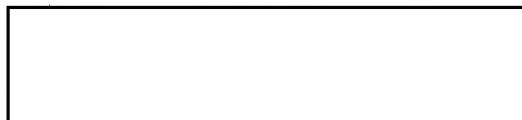


25X1 One MIG-21 and one MIG-17 were shot down by US aircraft.

North of the 20th Parallel (see the map)

#### Industry

12. The pace of repair to damaged industrial facilities has apparently increased. Significant progress in repairing powerplants has been recently observed at Hon Gai, Uong Bi, and Thai Nguyen. Additional generating capacity probably will be ready for service at these plants within the next few months. Partial repair of the Viet Tri paper plant and increased activity at the plant's dock



for raw materials indicates that limited production of paper may be under way for the first time in more than a year. No repair work was evident at the Thai Nguyen iron and steel complex, which has been inactive since mid-1967.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

ently for the first time, trucks are being imported through Lao Cai in northwestern North Vietnam.

[REDACTED] about 150 trucks parked just north of the border and an additional 15 railroad cars possibly loaded with vehicles. [REDACTED] revealed about 110 trucks parked in the area. The reason for the use of this import route is unclear; it may possibly reflect an adjustment to the transport disruptions caused by the flooding and civil turmoil in China.

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15. Disruption to transportation from flooding has subsided. Flooding had interrupted rail traffic at Viet Tri during the middle of July, but limited rail service had been resumed by the end of the month. Truck service through Viet Tri was available throughout the month by use of a cable bridge. Although flooding also occurred in the Hanoi area, disruption of transportation was insignificant, since the Doumer Bridge was serviceable for both rail and truck traffic. [REDACTED]

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#### Air Defense

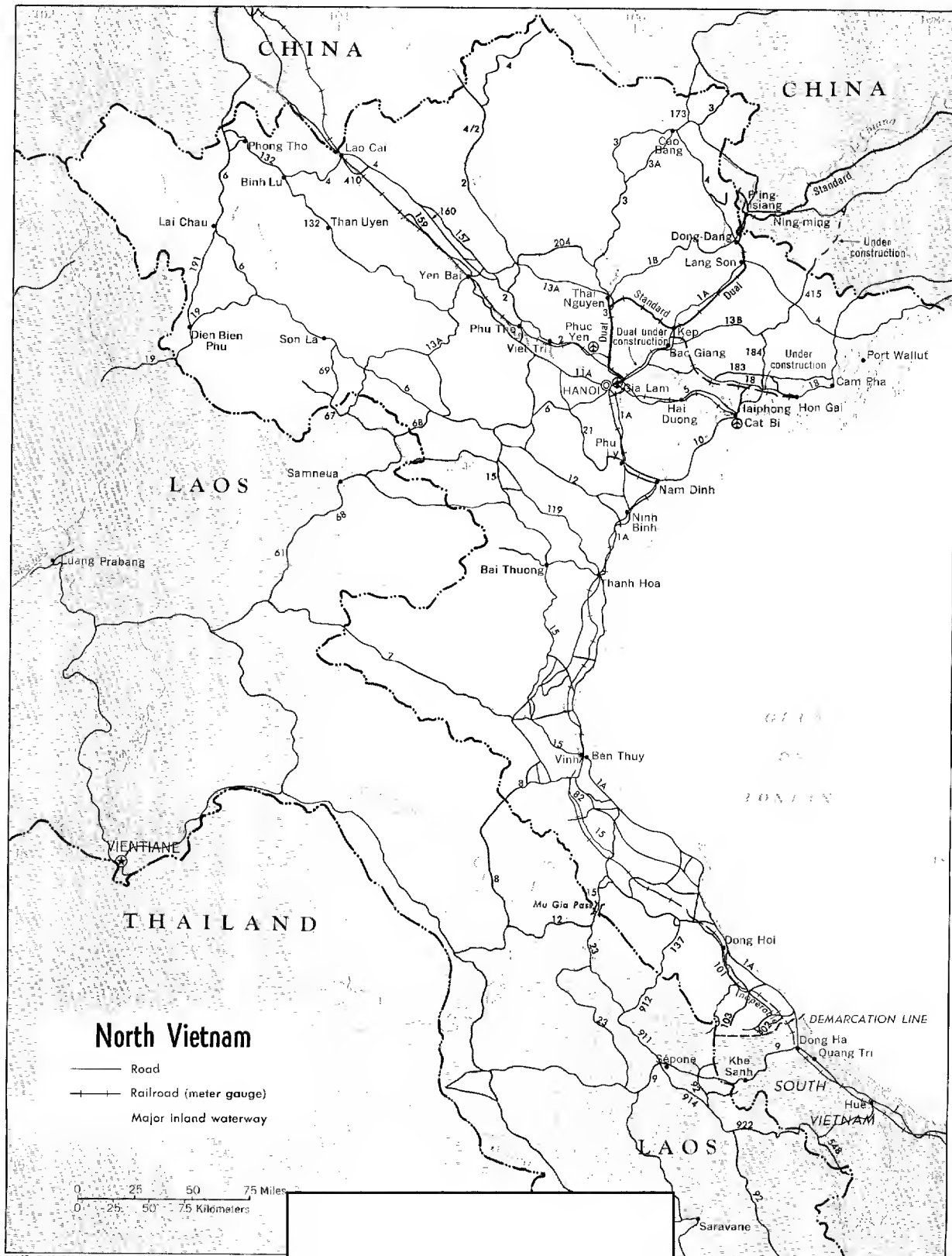
16. North Vietnam's inventory of MIG-21's continues to increase. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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revealed 28 MIG-21's at North Vietnamese airfields, primarily Phuc Yen. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] More than one-half of the MIG-21 force in-country probably now consists of all-weather aircraft. The acquisition of these new planes [REDACTED]

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raises the total inventory to a record level of 146.

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17. North Vietnam continues to improve and expand the use of its airfields, although jet fighters are still stationed only at Phuc Yen, Gia Lam, and Kep. [REDACTED]

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#### Foreign Trade and Aid

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19. Ship congestion at Haiphong reached a record high in July, but had eased by the end of the month as foreign ship arrivals fell to two-thirds the June level. The increase in cargo in open storage at Haiphong that normally follows increased imports has not materialized, because of the easing of transportation and distribution problems since the bombing restrictions were adopted.

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25X1 20. North Vietnam's trade delegation has returned home after completing its tour of other Communist countries. An agreement for economic, military, and technical aid for 1969 was signed with China [redacted] after a protracted stay in that country. Very little information has been made available on this agreement or on similar agreements signed earlier with the other major Communist aid donors.

[redacted]

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